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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: SHUM, SREF, PREL, RO, US (CALCIU-DUMITREASA,
GHEORGHE)
SUBJECT: BACKGROUND OF AMBASSADOR'S DECEMBER 15
MEETING AT MFA

REF: BUCHAREST 07843

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY. MFA NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS OFFICER MIRCEA RACEANU APPARENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD THE DECEMBER 15 EMBASSY REQUEST THAT THE MINISTRY ARRANGE A CALL BY CONGRESSMAN MARY SILJANDER ON FR. CALCIU ASSUMING THAT IT WAS A PROVOCATIVE REQUEST SUBMITTED TO TEST THE GOR'S DECEMBER 14 PROHIBITION OF CALLS BY EMBASSY OFFICERS ON FR. CALCIU RACEANU COMMUNICATED HIS IMPRESSIONS TO HIS SUPERIORS, HENCE THE DECISION TO SUMMON THE AMBASSADOR TO THE MINISTRY DECEMBER 15. RACEANU'S MISUNDERSTANDING SEEMS TO HAVE ARISEN IN PART FROM HIS SUSPICION (UNFOUDED) THAT A GROUP OF VISITING AMERICANS AND BRITISH -- OF WHICH THE CONGRESSMAN WAS A MEMBER -- INTENDED TO CREATE AN INCIDENT. LIKE MFA CONSULAR OPERATIONS DIRECTOR GHEORGHE BADESCU, RACEANU OBSERVED VAGUELY THAT "PROBLEMS" LIKE THAT OF THE CALCIUS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY HANDLED IN THE PAST. END SUMMARY.

3. IN A PRE-DINNER CONVERSATION ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 15, DCM OBSERVED TO MFA OFFICE IN CHARGE OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS MIRCEA RACEANU THAT WE HAD RECENTLY LEARNED THAT FATHER CALCIU AND HIS WIFE WANTED TO EMIGRATE TO THE UNITED STATES AND THAT THEY APPARENTLY WERE GETTING THE RUN AROUND FROM THE ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES WHEN THEY TRIED TO APPLY FOR PERMISSION TO LEAVE. HE ADDED THAT IF THE NEWS MEDIA LEARN OF THIS -- AND THEY PROBABLY WOULD -- MUCH OF THE GOOD WILL GAINED BY THE GOR FROM ITS RELEASING FR. CALCIU FROM PRISON WOULD BE ERASED. REFERRING TO THE AMBASSADOR'S MEETING THAT AFTERNOON WITH THE MFA'S BADESCU AND SANDULESCU (SEE REFTTEL), AT WHICH CONGRESSMAN SILJANDER'S REQUEST TO CALL ON FR. CALCIU WAS TURNED DOWN, THE DCM SPECULATED THAT THE GOR'S BARRING CONCERNED VISITORS FROM SEEING FR. CALCIU PROBABLY

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WOULD ENSURE THAT HIS PROBLEMS WERE PUBLICIZED.

4. RACEANU RESPONDED THAT HE AND THE POLITICAL SIDE OF THE MFA HAD BECOME INVOLVED IN THE CURRENT ROUND OF THE CALCIU MATTER RELATIVELY LATE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ADVISED OF THE DECEMBER 14 MEETING BETWEEN BADESCU AND SANDULESCU AND THE DCM ONLY LATE THE SAME AFTERNOON AFTER IT WAS OVER. HIS DIRECTORATE, HE SAID, WAS NOT INVOLVED ("IT'S LARGELY A MINISTRY OF INTERIOR MATTER") UNTIL AN EMBASSY OFFICER TELEPHONED HIM SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST INFORMING HIM THAT CONGRESSMAN SILJANDER HAD EXPRESSED A STRONG DESIRE TO VISIT FR. CALCIU AND ASKING HIM IF ARRANGEMENT COULD BE MADE. (EMBASSY COMMENT: AT THAT TIME RACEANU TOLD THE EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE HAD ONLY TWO THINGS TO TELL HIM: (1) THAT HE SHOULD SPEAK WITH THE DCM TO LEARN WHAT THE GOR'S POLICY WAS REGARDING CALLS ON FR. CALCIU; AND (2) THAT THE MFA DOES NOT DEAL WITH THIS MATTER.)

5. RACEANU SAID THAT HE HAD UNDERSTOOD (EMBASSY COMMENT: INCORRECTLY) THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD REQUESTED THAT THE MINISTRY ARRANGE A CALL BY HIMSELF AND THE CONGRESSMAN ON FR. CALCIU. HE SAID THAT IN VIEW OF BADESCU'S AND SANDULESCU'S STATEMENTS TO THE DCM ABOUT EMBASSY OFFICERS CALLING ON CALCIU HE CONSIDERED THE REQUEST TO BE DELIBERATELY PROVOCATIVE.

6. AFTER HE RECEIVED THIS CALL, RACEANU SAID, HE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER STEFAN ANDREI, WHO TOLD HIM THAT, IF THE CONGRESSMAN AND THE AMBASSADOR WERE INTERESTED IN PROVOKING AN INCIDENT, HE WOULD WASH HIS HANDS OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ACTIONS.

7. THE DCM EXPLAINED CAREFULLY THAT THE EMBASSY OFFICER WHO HAD SPOKEN WITH HIM ABOUT THE REQUESTED INTERVIEW WITH FR. CALCIU HAD INDEED BEEN ACTING AT THE AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST, BUT THAT HE HAD BEEN SEEKING AN INTERVIEW ONLY FOR CONGRESSMAN SILJANDER AND NOT FOR THE AMBASSADOR, THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD NO INTENTION OF CALLING ON FR. CALCIU.

8. RACEANU SAID THAT, MOREOVER, HE BELIEVED THAT THE VISITING CHRISTIAN RESPONSE INTERNATIONAL (CRI) GROUP, WHICH INCLUDED CONGRESSMAN SILJANDER, HAD STIMULATED

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THE DECEMBER 11 ATTEMPT BY TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS TO CALL ON FR. CALCIU AS WELL AS THE REQUEST THAT THE CONGRESSMAN BE PERMITTED TO CALL ON FR. CALCIU TO PROVOKE PUBLICITY-ATTRACTING SITUATIONS.

9. DCM EXPLAINED THE DECEMBER 11 VISIT BY EMBASSY OFFICERS TO FR. CALCIU'S RESIDENCE HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY INFORMATION THAT THE EMBASSY RECEIVED THAT FR. CALCIU DESIRED TO EMIGRATE AND THAT HE WAS BEING PREVENTED FROM VISITING THE EMBASSY TO APPLY FOR ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES. THE CRI GROUP'S VISIT, HE EMPHASIZED, WAS PURELY COINCIDENTAL. AS THE GROUP WAS AVOWEDLY INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS IN ROMANIA, HE NOTED, IT WAS PREDICTABLE THAT ITS MEMBERS WOULD TAKE AN INTEREST IN FR. CALCIU.

10. RACEANU OBSERVED THAT, IF UNITED STATES WANTED TO SHOVE ROMANIA COMPLETELY INTO THE ARMS OF THE

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USSR, PUSHING GOR DECISION MAKERS BACK ON THEIR PRIDE BY AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE CALCIUS THAT SUGGESTED EXTRA-TERRITORIAL INTERFERENCE IN ROMANIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS WOULD DO SO. HE REITERATED A POINT THAT HE HAD FREQUENTLY MADE IN THEIPUST THAT THERE WERE QUITE A FEW PERSONS WITHIN THE GOR WHO WANTED CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE USSR ANYWAY. THERE ARE SOME MATTERS LON WHICH THE UNITED STATES CANNOT PUSH, HE SAID, AND "CALCIU" IS ONE OF THEM.

11. RACEANU ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE CALCIUS ARE JUST THE MOST RECENT OF A SERIES OF SIMILAR CELEBRATED CASES THAT HAVE ARISEN ABOUT EVERY TWO YEARS OR SO SINCE 1975. IT WOULD APPEAR, HE SAID, THAT THE UNITED STATES WANTS TO KEEP HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES ALIVE.

12. THE DCM RESPONDED THAT HIS MENTION OF 1975 WAS INTERESTING AS THAT WAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER ROMANIA HAD SIGNED THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT, BY WHICH IT HAD AGREED TO A CERTAIN STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR TOWARD ITS OWN CITIZENS.

13. RACEANU AGREED IT WOULD BE WELL IF THIS PROBLEM WERE SOLVED QUICKLY AND DAMAGE TO BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE PREVENTED. RACEANU, LIKE BADESCU THE DAY BEFORE, THEN SAID THAT SIMILAR EMIGRATION PROBLEMS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY HANDLED IN THE PAST.

FUNDERBURK
END OF MESSAGE

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